

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Applicant thanks Examiner Anderson for thorough examination of the application, as detailed in the Office action (Paper 2) mailed 2 October 2002. Claims 2, 9, and 12 have been cancelled and claims 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 14 have been amended with no new matter added. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-8, 10, 11, 13, and 14 remain under prosecution in this application. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application in view of the following arguments.

II. Drawings

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings were stated to fail to show the racks "independent" and "interconnected" as defined in claims 1, 6, and 11. The showing or canceling the features from the claims was required.

✓ The features have been cancelled from claims 1, 6, and 11. Thus, the objection is believed to be overcome.

With this in view, applicant respectfully submits that the objection be withdrawn.

III. Claim amending

Claims 2, 9, and 12 have been canceled, with their content having been incorporated into claims 1, 6, and 11, respectively.

IV. Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Terms which make the claims indefinite were stated to include “each other” in claims 1, 6, and 11. Also, claims 1, 6, and 11 were stated to be misdescriptive “because it is the unit which moves the term “row” as used in the claim is descriptive of the unit.”

The terms in question have been cancelled from claims 1, 6, and 11. Thus, the rejection is believed to be overcome.

With this in view, applicant respectfully submits that the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, rejection be withdrawn.

V. Claim rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, as presented, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Naito et al. The Office action asserts “Naito showing units 203-207 on tracks 209, the units having racks of shelves 235 divided into cells by walls 234 on either side of each unit. Since shelving of this kind is typically made of metal it is inherent that some degree of electrostatic shielding is provided.”

Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Of claims 1 and 2 addressed in the rejection, claim 1 has been amended, claim 2 has been cancelled. A reticle storing movable rack system according to amended claim 1 features, inter alia, racks that are electrically grounded and cells that are made of metal and electrically connected to the racks to make the cells electrostatically shielded. The Naito patent does not disclose or teach these or similar features. For that reason, applicant believes that the 35 USC § 102 rejection is overcome and respectfully submits that it be withdrawn.

As to “some degree of electrostatic shielding” inherent to articles made of metal, applicant believes that, in the absence of electrical grounding those articles, they would be unable to discharge the charge accumulated on them, and thus the state of shielding items inside those articles may worsen rather than improve.

At the same time, applicant believes that a 35 USC § 103 Naito-based rejection of claim 1 as amended would be improper either. The Naito disclosure shows no concern whatsoever about electrostatic properties of shiftable article storage device described and claimed in the Naito patent. Therefore, there is no motivation for Naito et al. to modify their device for it to acquire those properties.

Having regard to all the above, applicant believes that claim 1, as amended, is patentable.

VI. Claim rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 3-12, as initially presented, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Naito et al as applied to claims 1, 2 and further in view of Dinverno.

Applicant respectfully disagrees.

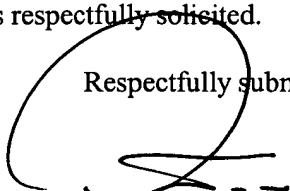
Claims 3-6 are believed to be patentable as dependent from patentable claim 1. Independent claims 6 and 11, as amended, are believed to be patentable over Naito et al, as applied to claims 1 and 2, and further in view of Dinverno. The arguments of novelty of claims 6 and 11, as amended, over Naito et al do not differ from those in the above used in defense of claim 1, as amended: the Naito patent does not disclose or teach racks that are electrically grounded and cells that are made of metal and electrically connected to the racks to make the cells electrostatically shielded. Adding Dinverno does not affect those arguments since Dinverno as well does not disclose or teach electrically grounded racks and metal cells electrically connected to the racks.

With this in view, applicant believes that the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection of claims 6 and 11, as amended, is overcome and respectfully submits that it be withdrawn. Claims 7, 8, and 10 are believed to be patentable as dependent from patentable base claims 6 and 11. Claims 13 and 14, which were rejected neither under § 102 nor under § 103, are also believed to be patentable.

VII. Conclusion

All the above considered, applicant believes that claims 1, 3-8, 10, 11, 13, and 14 are in the condition of allowance, and this favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted



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MARKED-UP VERSION OF REPLACED CLAIMS

1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, AND 14

1. (Once amended) A reticle storing movable rack system comprising:
 - a plurality of flat tracks fixedly secured to a floor,
 - a plurality of [rows of] storage units, each of said storage units comprising [of] a plurality of [independent] racks [interconnected with each other and] adapted to be moved [as a single row] along flat tracks of said plurality of flat tracks, each of said racks being electrically grounded, and
 - an operator engageable drive assist mechanism to move [rows of said plurality of rows] said racks,
 - wherein each of said racks comprises shelves with plurality of cells for housing reticles therein, said cells having electrostatic shielding properties, said electrostatic shielding properties being secured by making said cells metallic and electrically connecting them to said racks.

5. (Once amended) The system according to claim 1 [3], wherein [rows of said plurality of rows] said racks are made double-sided.

6. (Once amended) A reticle storing movable rack system comprising:
- a plurality of flat tracks fixedly secured to a floor,
 - a plurality of [rows of] storage units, each of said storage units comprising [of] a plurality of [independent] racks [interconnected with each other and] adapted to be moved [as a single row] along flat tracks of said plurality of flat tracks, and
 - an operator engageable drive assist mechanism to move said racks [rows of said plurality of rows],
 - wherein each of said racks comprises shelves with plurality of cells for housing reticles therein, [and]
 - wherein, with the purpose of imparting antiseismic properties to the system, said shelves are made with a slope directed inside said racks, and
 - wherein each of said racks is electrically grounded and said cells have electrostatic shielding properties.

8. (Once amended) The system according to claim 6, wherein said racks [rows of said plurality of rows] are made double-sided.

10. (Once amended) The system according to claim 6 [9], wherein said electrostatic shielding properties are secured by making said cells metallic and electrically connecting them to said racks.

11. (Once amended) A reticle storing movable rack system comprising:

- a plurality of flat tracks fixedly secured to a floor,
- a plurality of [rows of] storage units, each of said storage units comprising [of] a plurality of [independent] racks [interconnected with each other and] adapted to be moved [as a single row] along flat tracks of said plurality of flat tracks, and
- an operator engageable drive assist mechanism to move said racks [rows of said plurality of rows],
- wherein each of said racks comprises shelves with plurality of cells for housing reticles therein, said shelves being made with a slope directed inside said racks and said cells having electrostatic shielding properties, said electrostatic shielding properties are secured by making said cells metallic, electrically connecting said metallic cells to said racks, and electrically grounding said racks.

14. (Once amended) The system according to claim 11, wherein said racks [rows of said plurality of rows] are made double-sided.